



Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held on September 20, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

Present:

Administration: Paula Mann, Director of Education
Theresa Bitonti, Special Education Coordinator
Frank Ricciuti, SJSH LAC Teacher/Curriculum Lead
Jody Weller, Superintendent of Education

Trustees: John Willemsen
Barbara McCool

Associations: April Porter, Community Living North Bay, Alternate
Corry Thomas, One Kids Place, Member
Marie Derosier, LDAO, Member
Caroline Labrecque, Nipissing First Nation, Member
Jeannie Boissonneault, NDSS, Member

Regrets: Mary Grise, Parent Representative, Member

1. PRAYER

Ms. Weller shared a "Prayer for Our Students" and Land Acknowledgement.

2. ROLL CALL/TRUSTEE ATTENDANCE

Roll call was completed.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Corry Thomas and seconded by April Porter THAT the agenda of September 20, 2022 be approved as presented.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by John Willemsen and seconded by Caroline Labrecque THAT the minutes of June 14, 2022 be approved as presented.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Board Presentations:

Ms. Andrusiek, Catholic Curriculum Coordinator, presented the following summer learning programs:

CODE Summer Learning STEAM Program Literacy and Numeracy: Grades 3-6 July 4-22, 2022

The Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) continued to support Summer Learning Programs and provide funding to participating boards for students to minimize learning loss, and for those students who may face social and economic challenges that affect their learning. A continued focus for this year's elementary program included bridging the learning gaps created by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Also, we were most pleased to be able to return to offering an in-person experience after two years of hosting the camp virtually.

This past summer, a total of 36 students participated in our CODE Summer Learning STEAM Program for Grades 3-6 students. The focus of the three week program was to support learning acceleration with a high focus on further developing the reading, writing and mathematics skills of our students using **STEAM Education**. STEAM education is an approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. This year's program was met with resounding success and students and parents enjoyed learning in a hands-on manner. Learning bags equipped with supplies and hands on materials were provided to students to support learning and engagement. As a key component of the program was parent engagement, our teachers established regular opportunities with parents to discuss their child's needs as well as provide resources to support their learning and development. We partnered once again with Science North to offer regular coding workshops where students used *Scratch Education Coding* to participate in weekly interactive workshops. Students also learned from the Science North "Bluecoats" in various workshops including: "Ask a Scientist", "Samples from Space", "Operation Rescue", and "DJ Robo". The student's families were also invited to learn from these sessions, which enhanced both levels of student and parent engagement.

Evidence-Based Reading Intervention Program: July 11-29, 2022

For the second consecutive summer, NPSC hosted an evidence-based reading intervention program that offered students an opportunity to receive intensive reading intervention and support. This program was part of the provincial effort to support learning recovery and renewal to address the impacts of learning disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This year we hosted twenty-eight Kindergarten to grade 3 students, including an older student identified as an English Language Learner (ELL). The in-person program was led by our English Catholic Curriculum Coordinator and two teachers and three Tutors in the Classroom to support the programming and instruction of the students.

Many of the students referred to this summer evidence-based reading intervention program benefited from the opportunity to continue to develop their early literacy skills. Students developed skills in a variety of areas including phonological awareness, sight word recognition, reading decodable books, and guided reading, which are foundational skills and were identified as areas of need for the students in developing them into proficient readers. Parents were also engaged in their child's learning. Sight words and decodable books were sent home every day for parents to work on. At the end of the program, parents received a newsletter outlining strategies and tips to support their child's development of the skills taught throughout the summer.

Within the first days of the program, assessments were administered by the educator team to determine the gaps in reading. These gaps then became the explicit teaching points in the whole group, shared reading, and small group lessons during literacy centers. From the assessments, it was determined that students needed intentional support with beginning, middle and end sounds, rhyming, segmenting, blending, and word families. Students were divided into small groups based on their common needs and because we had two educators and three tutors, we were able to explicitly teach students in small groups addressing their individual needs and therefore saw tremendous gains in the short period of time that students were in the program.

Fostering a love of reading so that students associate reading with positive emotions was also an overall goal of the reading program. The teachers presented high interest narratives so that the students were curious about print and motivated to learn to read. Not all children learn to read at the same age or pace so including parents on this exciting learning journey was certainly of great value! With great confidence, we are able to share that the young students engaged in this program feel better about themselves as emerging readers and are progressing towards academic successes and reading at grade level.

b) SEAC Action Plan 2022-2023

SEAC reviewed the 2021-2022 Action Plan and discussed 2022-2023 items (i.e. professional development such as summer learning presentations and the Ontario Autism Program as well as potential school visits). SEAC was encouraged to review the Action Plan template and bring back additional suggestions next month.

6. UPDATES

N/A

7. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Weller shared correspondence received and provided updates on the following:

- a) 2022-2023 Health & Safety Measures in Schools – August 5, 2022
- b) Back to School: Normal, Stable & Enjoyable – September 2, 2022
- c) Memo to School Boards & School Authorities – September 9, 2022
- d) NPSC Shortlisted for Excellence in Governance Award – September 16, 2022
- e) Memo to all school boards and school authorities regarding Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth passing on September 8, 2022 from Hon. Stephen Lecce - September 9, 2022

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

a) Board Report

i) Superintendent's Update

Ms. Weller shared an update on NPSC's beginning school year Professional Development days:

August 31, 2022 – Literacy & Numeracy: Learning Renewal

- Health & Safety Training
- OCT: Sexual Abuse Prevention Program
- September 1, 2022 – Mental Health & Well Being Focus
- Prevalent Medical Conditions
- Cyber Bully & Prevention
- Anti Sex Trafficking

ii) Coordinator's Update:

Supporting Students with Special Needs: July & August 2022

Supporting students with complex special needs continued throughout the summer months. This summer we hosted 40 elementary and 20 secondary students in summer learning opportunities. The program was led by a team of qualified teachers who provided students with opportunities to continue to build upon their communication and socialization skills. Elementary sessions included many interactive activities such as: learning to cook, to dance, to create art, plan an instrument and practice recreational skills, all which emphasized target skills in participation, turn taking and following directions. At the secondary level, students participated in a school orientation and tours, a parent information session, various social opportunities to visit old friends and make new ones as well as functional life skills development such as cooking, baking, using kitchen appliances, and money management. Students also enjoyed participating in fun aptitude activities that assisted them discover various traits related to their learning profile and learning style.

Throughout the summer we also worked closely with Home & Community Care Support Services NE to plan for the transition of students who received medical diagnosis over the summer. Due to the opportunity to coordinate health supports over the summer months, students were able to transition to school in a meaningful, safe and timely manner. Our summer team looks forward to presenting the highlights of the program to SEAC in October.

In support of providing students with a normal return to school, we are working closely with community partners to transition in students with complex special needs. Currently we are working with HANDS OAP Entry to School program as well as One Kids Place/NNB Transition to School program. We believe the probability of a successful transition is significantly increased when school teams work with parents and community partners and providers to develop coordinated transition plans for students with exceptionalities.

iii) Secondary Lead's Update:

SJSH Summer Transition Program: During the month of August, 14 students from our feeder school participated in the summer transition program to support students with high complex special needs

IEP Development: The special education department is currently reviewing and working on IEP for Semester #1. Parent/guardians will be provided with a copy on October 18

Empower Program: The Empower Program is running at SJSH with 2 sections during Semester #1 to support students with a learning disability in the area of reading and writing

Workplace Experience: Workplace experience programming will begin September 26 for students who are currently enrolled in the LAC program. 6 students from the LAC program gained part-time employment over the summer months!

Civics/Student Vote Program: Our LAC program have registered for the Student Vote Program for this upcoming fall. Students from the LAC program will also be having a tour of City Hall prior to the election occurring

Fit-Bit Project/Mental Health: In collaboration with our mental health team, we will be completing a project within our Physical Education class with the use of a Fit Bit to track our health and wellness

Transition Fair: With the support of outside agencies, we are in the beginning stages of working alongside with various individuals in creating a "Transition Fair" prior to the end of the school year

Community Living/Community Links Program: The LAC program will have a presentation in October in partnership with Community Living for a leadership opportunity

Special Olympics: SJSH will host this event in person on October 20, 2022.

NPSC Grade 7 & 8 Soccer Tournament: SJSH is hosting on October 5, 2022.

b) Association Reports

i) LDAO – Marie Derosier, Member

The LDAO SEAC Circular will be forwarded to Ms. Weller for distribution.

ii) Community Living North Bay – April Porter, Alternate

Mr. Lachance highlighted the success of summer employment opportunities to the Community Living North Bay Board of Directors. October is Disability Employment Awareness Month. Further information to be forwarded.

iii) One Kids Place – Corry Thomas, Member

NIL

iv) Nipissing First Nation – Caroline Labrecque, Member
NIL

v) NDSS, Jeannie Boissonneault, Member
NDSS is excited to remain supportive of children with down syndrome and welcome new families as well as a new 2022 executive with many creative ideas.

9. OTHER

Ms. Derosier asked if the local bus driver shortages are impacting our NPSC specialized classrooms and programs. To date, shortages have not impacted NPSC specialized classrooms and programs. NPSSTS has shared positive news regarding local recruitment, training, and licencing of school bus drivers. NPSC continues to work collaboratively with all partners to develop innovative solutions to the concern. Ms. Weller acknowledged parents and guardians as proactive and creative partners when delay issues arose.

10. DATE OF NEXT SEAC MEETING

The next SEAC meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via Teams.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by John Willemsen and seconded by Jeannie Boissonneault THAT the meeting of September 20, 2022 adjourned at 7:21 p.m.